

**i'm gonna sleep
cause you live in
my daydreams**

eddiespaghetti (foxwatson)

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Summary:

Eddie's Great Aunt Joyce is getting married, and his mother calls to inform him he needs to take someone to the wedding. Who better than his roommate and best friend Richie Tozier? If Eddie can somehow manage to ask him and survive and not make an idiot out of himself - oh. Too late.

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Author's Note:

so once upon a time i was like "gee i'm stuck on all the long things i'm writing, i'll write something short to get me unstuck" and then. somehow this happened. the title is from glass animals' take a slice, which i listened to a lot while writing. you can also find richie's road trip playlist [here](#) in case you want to listen when it comes up in the fic.

Sometimes Eddie felt like whoever assigned roommates in his dorm had a real fucking sense of humor - or at least they must have thought they did. Assigning him to live with Richie Tozier was practically halfway to a sitcom just by the nature of it all. Richie left his shit everywhere, and Eddie got too anxious to function if he let his clothes get that wrinkled or his things get that... Everywhere. It practically looked like there was a tape line divider down the middle of their room, just because Richie knew better than to let his mess cross into Eddie's section of the room. They bickered like an old married couple over everything from pizza toppings to attractive actors. By all accounts, they should have hated each other.

Except it turned out they liked a lot of the same music, and mostly the same movies, and that they actually liked each other, a lot, under all the arguing. Richie had ended up being Eddie's best friend, really - which only added to how ridiculous it all was from Eddie's perspective.

Part of this was the fact that Eddie was, frankly, too gay to function, and Richie fit Eddie's list of ideal boyfriend characteristics pretty much to a T. He was tall and funny (not that Eddie would ever tell him that to his face), he had dark curly hair and big thick-rimmed glasses, and he was sort of an amateur musician. Every time Eddie found out something else about him, caught him painting his nails for

fun or wearing some ridiculous vintage t-shirt with a shitty pun, he was overwhelmed again by how unbelievably stereotypically hard he'd fallen for his shitty college roommate. It wasn't even like Richie was necessarily straight - Eddie was pretty sure he was bi - it was just that he was also pretty sure Richie would never even consider dating him.

The real problem was that Richie should have been an asshole, by all accounts - but he wasn't. Eddie had seen him bend down to pet any dog that crossed his path. He saw the twitch of insecurity in Richie's smile whenever he told a joke and waited for someone to laugh, or when he played a song on his guitar for the first time.

Richie Tozier was, in all his imperfections, practically perfect.

These were the sorts of things Eddie groaned into the phone at Stan whenever he could be alone in the room, certain that Richie was somewhere else was on campus.

"And he's nice! And hot! That's the worst part!"

"Why do I have to suffer through this again? Isn't it someone else's turn?"

"Stan, I need you to understand."

"All I understand is that it sounds like he'd annoy the hell out of me. I'm sure if you like him, he's great, and we'd get along, but from a

distance I just kind of want to punch him.”

“How could you say that?”

Stan sighed. “Again. Why aren’t you talking to Bev about this?”

“Bev knows him! They went to high school together or something. They probably used to make out under the bleachers. And that’s not like, a comment, I’m just saying, they probably did.”

“I think you just like to torture yourself, Eddie. And you’re being ridiculous. This guy is the farthest thing from cool-”

“I never said he was cool! I have not stooped that low.”

Stan sighed again - this time really seeming to go for an Olympic medal in exasperation. “Eddie. Either request a roommate change or do something about the situation, I’m always going to give you the same advice.”

“I don’t need advice, I just want someone to listen to me. I can’t talk to Richie, Bill’s always busy with Mike and in another time zone, I can’t talk to Bev, and Ben never answers his phone in the library, so you’re what I’ve got here, Stan.”

“Are you done now, then? Can I be free?”

“...Yes, fine. For now.”

“Thank you.” Eddie’s only response was a dial tone, then, and he put his phone down and rolled over, groaning into his pillows.

The real problem with living with the boy you were in love with was the constant need to look at least presentable. It was only about five minutes of stressing out over Richie’s general existence before Eddie felt the need to go neaten up in a mirror again, making sure he didn’t look as ridiculous as he felt.

Richie wasn’t even supposed to get back until later that night - he had some kind of rehearsal for a show or the comedy club he was a part of - but Eddie felt like he could never be too careful.

Eddie had found a distraction in his homework by the time he got the text from his mother.

I need to speak to you. Call me when you can.

Texts like that, from Sonia Kaspbrak, were never good news. Literally never. Eddie was still shocked that he’d managed to escape all the way to New York for college and that his mom hadn’t come chasing after him - every time she called or tried to talk to him, he was terrified that she’d tell him she was going to stop supporting him at all (not that her pittance of an allowance for him did much more than cover some meals), or that she’d really figured out something that would make her disown him entirely. Then again, maybe either

of those things would be a relief at this point.

Since Richie still wasn't back, and Eddie knew the longer he put off the phone call, the worse things would get and the more stressed out he would feel, he picked up the phone to call his mom back.

"Hey, mom."

"Eddie. I have some news. You may want to sit down."

Eddie looked at his desk, furrowed his brow. "Yes, I'm sitting down. What is it?"

"Your great aunt Joyce is getting married."

"Oh, I'm-" Eddie was fully prepared to give his condolences because he was fully prepared for his mother to tell him his great aunt had died. Instead, he suddenly found he had to hold back laughter. He paused. "Right. I mean. Good for her?"

"She should hardly be getting married at her age! It'll be the death of her."

Eddie had to hold the phone away, then, just to laugh. He brought it back to his ear. "Right. Well. I can send her a present or something, right? Maybe some heart medication."

“Edward Kaspbrak!” Eddie winced at his mother’s use of his full name. “You’ve got to come home for the wedding. And don’t talk about your great aunt that way. You’ll bring her something in person. Something nice.”

“Okay. Right. Of course. Maybe a... Blender?”

There was a long pause, and Eddie held his breath, waiting to be scolded again. “...That’ll be fine. There’s one on the registry. You’ll have to drive home next weekend. There’s been hardly any planning at all. It’s all some kind of whirlwind romance.”

Eddie had trouble imagining his great aunt getting into a whirlwind anything without breaking a bone, but apparently she’d managed. For a moment he felt a little pathetic that his 84 year old great aunt could get a boyfriend and he couldn’t, but then he pulled it together. “Right. Next weekend. Well I can do that, I don’t have class on Friday, so. I can come home for the weekend. I’ll drive down. Should I... Bring someone?”

“Would you bring a nice girl?”

Another wince. Eddie’s mother had known he was gay since before he left for college - but she never seemed to give up hope that he’d get over it. “Not really, mommy. I could bring a nice boy?”

“Try not to shock the whole family, will you? And make sure they’re clean.”

With that, apparently Eddie had ended the conversation, because his mother had hung up on him. Eddie sighed and rubbed at his forehead.

Eddie would rather stick himself with a needle than go home on his own - and he used testosterone patches for a reason. Still, his options for boys to take were limited. Stan would have had to fly up, and so would Bill or Mike. Ben went to the same college, but he probably had work that weekend, since he took as many shifts at the library as he could. Bev could be funny, just because Eddie had a feeling his mother would hate her more than any boy Eddie could have brought - well. Except maybe Richie. And that's the thing, right, was that Richie would probably say yes. He'd be funny and keep Eddie company and they'd both have a good time. Except for that to happen, Eddie would actually have to muster up the courage to ask, which was never going to happen.

He was still dividing his time between his crisis and his homework when the door flew open and Richie finally came back.

"Eds! What a day." He came over and kissed Eddie on the cheek, leaning over his chair, and Eddie swatted him off, smiling.

"What was so exciting about your day?"

"Mm, nothing, just long. Glad to be back again in home sweet dorm room. What about you? Did you go out and have thrilling adventures while I was gone before you came back to your homework?" Richie went over to his own bed and kicked off his Converse to lie down. He propped himself up on an elbow to keep looking at Eddie while they

talked.

“Not really. I talked to Stan.” *And my mom told me I had to come home for a wedding and I would pretty much do anything if you would come with me*, he thought, but didn’t say.

“Right. He’s the one in... Atlanta?”

Eddie smiled. “That’s the one.”

“See the effort I put in for you, Eds? And you don’t even appreciate it.”

“You’re such a loser,” Eddie muttered in response - but he couldn’t wipe the smile from his face either.

If Richie was home, it was starting to get late - and a look at Eddie’s phone told him that was true. He could finish his homework in the morning. He picked up his pajamas and went into the bathroom to change. Richie didn’t seem to have any issue changing in their room standing by the closet if he needed to, but Eddie still felt strange about it.

When he came back to their room, he kept his binder carefully tucked in with the rest of his clothes - not because he didn’t want Richie to see it, but because with Richie’s things being the way they were, they’d gotten their binders confused more than once, and found that they very much did not wear the same size.

Eddie did wonder sometimes if that was why he and Richie had been assigned to room together - out of some strange initiative or concern that they'd both be bullied - but if that was the case, he couldn't even really stay mad about it. He was too glad to have met Richie.

After putting his clothes away, he turned off his desk lamp and lay down, then turned to Richie in the dim light of Richie's side of the room. "You said you and Bev went to high school together, right? So how did you two like. Meet?"

Richie laughs. "Shit. It sounds a lot, like. Cooler than it was. We used to smoke together behind the bleachers. Cause, you know, everyone knows it's fucking terrible for you now, so no one really does it as much anymore except like art students in college, but she used to steal her dad's cigarettes, and I would bum off my mom, and we would skip classes to smoke together. We also both had pretty shitty parents, I'm sure that helped. So we'd talk and smoke and I'd try and be her wingman with all the girls she had a thing for - not that she needed my help, mostly I just made an asshole out of myself but she still likes me anyways, so."

Eddie hummed, but then blushed, because of course Stan was right, and he was an idiot. "She seems cool."

"Bev? She is cool. Way cooler than me, but I'm a fucking loser. She just used to get shit where we went to school because we grew up in the middle of fucking nowhere. Assholes couldn't decide if she was a slut or a lesbian - which, neither, she dated like one boy and two girls. And not like it was any of their business either way."

“Yeah. Me and Stan and our other friends were so in the middle of nowhere our biggest bully still had a fucking mullet in the 2010s, so.”

Richie laughed, the sound loud in the otherwise quiet room, and Eddie smiled into the darkness. “Wow. Yeah, that’s pretty incredible.”

Eddie yawned and snuggled further into his blankets. Every night living with Richie felt like a sleepover sometimes - more often than not they stayed up later than they should have, just talking. “I should probably get some sleep. You going out early tomorrow?”

“Nope. Thursday, remember? You, me, Ben and Bev can get breakfast tomorrow if you want.”

“Oh, yeah. Sounds good.”

It was surprisingly easy to fall asleep after talking to Richie as long as he turned to face the wall and didn’t think too much about Richie being able to watch him.

He woke in the morning, like he always did, a little before Richie and twenty times less awake. Neither he nor Richie were morning people, but Eddie was particularly murderous before he had coffee and food, while Richie was mostly just quieter and sort of bleary in the mornings.

While Eddie was still in the bathroom, brushing his teeth, Richie joined him at the next sink. Richie’s left elbow brushed Eddie’s right,

and they glanced at each other in companionable and sleepy silence.

Richie came back to the room dressed, and they both got ready and went down to the dining hall to meet Ben and Bev after exchanging some texts.

Once in the dining hall, they both went straight for the waffle makers - fortunately there were two. Richie seemed to only ever eat desert-based foods for breakfast, because he said it was all he could do to get himself to eat breakfast. Eddie just enjoyed the opportunity to finally eat whatever he wanted for breakfast without his mom being a complete weirdo about it. When their trays were filled with food, they both paid and found a table. Bev and Ben joined them only shortly after - Eddie had fortunately already finished his first coffee by then.

“Hey, guys!” Ben said, smiling at them. Bev waved at them after she set down her tray, but already had a cinnamon roll in her mouth that she’d taken a bite out of.

“Hey. How are you guys?” Eddie asked.

“Tired as ever,” Bev responded, sitting down.

“Mood,” Richie said, and Eddie snorted at him.

They mostly ate quietly, and eventually Richie excused himself to go and get some more syrup for his waffle, to add to the already ungodly

amount.

“Hey, Bev,” Eddie said quietly.

“Mm?”

“Could I, um. Ask you something?”

“I guess, sure.”

“Right, well, my mom told me I have to come home for this wedding next weekend and I was kind of wondering-”

“She hates weddings, Eddie,” Ben said, and Bev gave him a look. “Well you do.”

Bev rolled her eyes. “Go ahead, Eddie.”

“Well I did think of asking you, it’s just that I would rather take a guy, right, so I was wondering if you like... thought that Richie would say yes to going with me.”

“If I’d say yes to what, Eds?”

Shit. Eddie froze, and turned to look up at Richie. He could see Bev's grin from the corner of his eye, and Ben looked ready to laugh, too.

I hate you, he mouthed to them, and then he turned fully to Richie, who was standing behind his chair. "Right. Well. My great aunt is getting married, and my mom is making me go home for the wedding, but she said I should bring someone, so I. Thought maybe I'd ask you to come."

Richie grinned. "You're really asking me to come to a wedding with you?" Eddie nodded. "Well of course I will, Eddie Spaghetti!"

Leaning down, Richie ruffled Eddie's hair, and Eddie swatted him away. "It is way too early in the morning for any of that, asshole."

"I can't help myself, I'm too excited. Getting asked to a wedding! By my very own Eds. It's more than I ever dreamed." Richie fake swooned and ended up sticking his elbow in Eddie's leftover syrup, and Ben, Bev, and Eddie all laughed at him.

Eddie still grabbed Richie's arm and wiped the syrup off with a wet napkin. "You're such a dumbass."

"Only for you," Richie said with a wink.

Eddie rolled his eyes, and ignored the looks Ben and Bev were giving him.

They got all the details settled later that night - that the wedding was not this weekend but next, that Eddie would drive, that they would both need suits.

That weekend, the week before the wedding, found them tooling around the discount rack at a men's store, looking for something for either of them that wouldn't leave them totally broke.

"Do I have to wear a tie? Because I'll do it for you, Eds, but I won't like it."

Eddie looked over to see Richie holding up a couple of tie options. "Let's just get ties at a thrift store. And you can get one with some ridiculous pattern to make yourself feel better and keep up your pattern of generally tragic outfits."

"Says the man that wears rainbow short-shorts," Richie replied with raised eyebrows.

"I know you like my shorts, you can't shame me for them in this store, I know better than that."

Richie laughed, but he looked down, and Eddie knew he was right.

"Anyways. We're here for suits. We can coordinate ties and shit once we actually have the suits."

Nodding, Richie slung an arm around Eddie and pulled him back to the discount suit rack.

They did actually manage to find suits. Eddie ended up with one that was a nice, dark, autumn red. Richie's was a nice deep blue that looked good next to Eddie's shade of red. They could also easily get ties to match the other's suit, and they could both wear black shoes, all of which Eddie relayed to Richie as they left the store.

Neither of their suits fit perfectly, but they fit well enough, and neither of them really had the money for alterations.

They were at the thrift store, with Richie holding up a Space Jam tie and waggling his eyebrows at Eddie, when Eddie's mom called again.

"Mom? Hi."

"Eddie, you're going to dress up for the wedding, aren't you? And make sure you bring that gift. Have you got everything settled? It's so bad for your health to let all this go to the last minute, you know that, don't you?"

"Mommy, I've already got a suit, and I know who I'm bringing, I just have to buy the gift."

"Is that your mom?" Richie asked. "Tell her I said hi."

Eddie shook his head, but his mother was already saying, “Oh, Eddie, who’s that?”

And that was the thing. When Sonia let Eddie go to college, her one requirement was that Eddie not room with another boy - for several reasons. She had no idea that Eddie agreed to room with anyone, let alone Richie. They’ve only ever talked when Richie was out of the room.

“Oh, that’s my uh. Boyfriend?”

He realized what he’d done as soon as the words were out of his mouth, but it was too late, then. Richie’s eyebrows shot up, and Eddie closed his eyes to try and block out the expression.

“Oh. You are bringing a boy, then.”

“Yes, mommy.”

“...Make sure he dresses up, too. I won’t have you bringing some mess into the wedding.”

His mother hung up, and Eddie noted in passing that she never seemed to say goodbye anymore. Then he opened his eyes.

“So did I miss something?” Richie asked. He was grinning.

Eddie exhaled in one long breath, and felt like his soul also left his body. “My mom doesn’t know I live with you, and I’m bringing you to the wedding anyways, so I was thinking date? But then that just sort of came out. I’m sorry.”

“I did think you’d have taken me to dinner first, Eds,” Richie said with a wink. Then, almost like it didn’t matter at all, he picked up a tie and held it in front of Eddie’s face. “I feel like if you don’t let me get this pineapple tie, I’m actually going to die.”

“Was that supposed to rhyme?” Eddie said, managing to joke back, somehow.

“No, actually, now I feel like a dipshit. Can I get the tie anyways?”

“I mean, you can get it, but you’re not wearing it to the wedding. Here.” Eddie picked up a red paisley tie, and kept digging until he found a blue paisley one that didn’t clash horribly. “I get the blue paisley and I match you, you get the red paisley, you get a pattern and I get the peace of mind that we’re sort of coordinated. Compromise?”

“Alright, alright. I’m getting the Space Jam one, though, you can’t stop me.”

“I never thought I could, Rich.”

Eddie was grateful for the distraction Richie seemed glad to provide, and for the fact that they just seemed to have moved on.

It didn't come up again until the night before they were supposed to leave, while they were both lying in their beds, the moonlight from the window being the only light left in the room.

"Okay so, genuine question, I'm not trying to be an asshole," Richie began.

Eddie turned over in bed to look at him. He could only see parts of Richie's face, his eyes shining in the slats of light that their blinds allowed. "Okay. What is it?"

"Am I actually supposed to pretend we're boyfriends at this wedding?"

Caught off-guard, Eddie blushed a little, and was glad for the dark. "Oh. Uh. I hadn't really thought about it. I guess my mom thinks we are now? On accident? So it depends on how you want to handle that."

Richie shrugged. "I mean, you haven't talked a lot about your mom."

"...Right. Well. Yeah. Uh. She was sort of shitty, when I was a kid. Not about like. Me being trans, just about me being gay - I don't

know, maybe it's some combination of the two? Mostly she just didn't want me to go anywhere or be around anyone. It was like she thought I would... Get contaminated or something. My dad died when I was a kid, I guess it triggered something for her, and she was always afraid I was going to get sick - I sort of got afraid of it, too." Eddie realized he'd started to overshare. "Uh. Just in the context of the wedding, she wanted me to bring a girl. I told her I wouldn't. She told me to make sure that I at least brought someone like. Presentable, basically. She used the word clean. Because she always does."

Richie laughed, then, and Eddie looked over in confusion. "You've got a hell of a way to pick 'em, then, Eds. You realize your mom's gonna hate me."

"I mean, not necessarily."

"Eddie, babe, be realistic. It sounds like she's gonna hate me."

"Well it's not like she actually likes me that much either!"

There was a pause. "I just need to gauge here - do you actually want me to help you piss off your mom? Is that a goal?"

Eddie bit his lip. "I mean that's not why I asked you. I asked you because I think you can... Make it fun. You know? I didn't just ask you because my mom won't like you. If that's what you're asking."

“...I guess it was, a little. So I should be on the closest thing I’ve got to best behavior unless otherwise notified?”

“Yeah. We’ll go with that. And then we don’t have to play up the couple thing too much, like we don’t have to do a lot of PDA or anything, we can pretend we’re just toning it down.” Eddie turned onto his back again, trying to calm back down enough to sleep some time in the next week. “Sorry for dragging you into all this. You can stay here if you want.”

“And miss your 84 year old great aunt’s wedding? Eds, it sounds like a fucking blast. Plus, I already bought that suit. No turning back now. And... You know, you’re right. We’ll have fun. Don’t worry so much.”

Eddie scoffed. “If only it were that easy.”

He heard Richie huff out a laugh, too. “Alright, fair. Try to worry as little as you can manage. I’ll do what I can to make that easy for you. Deal?”

“...Deal. Thanks, Rich.”

“Of course, Eds.”

Eventually, somehow, Eddie managed to fall asleep.

They left early the next day, which was a Friday, since the wedding

was on Saturday, and neither of them had any Friday classes. Richie had ducked out of a rehearsal for that weekend, but apparently it was supposed to be fine. Eddie was grateful either way.

Eddie had his car at school, because his mother insisted he be able to drive home. His car was just shitty enough to be inconvenient, even though his mother had paid enough to be sure it wouldn't break down on the drive between New York and Maine. It only had a cassette player and the radio, and the air conditioner never worked in the summer. Still, it was pleasant fall weather, so the temperature wouldn't be too bad. His concern was mainly the music.

He and Richie got breakfast at the dining hall, Eddie had quite a bit of coffee, and then they loaded all their things into his car.

That was the point at which Richie noticed there was only a cassette player.

"Oh, Eds. You really do only have a tape player, huh?"

"Yes, I was telling the truth before, I did not make it up. There's a whole... thing of tapes in the dashboard, you can pick some, but just. You know lay off on laughing at me, it's not my fault."

"I guess it's a good thing I believed you," Richie said, and he pulled something out of his jacket pocket.

When Eddie stopped the car to look, it was a tape, in a case. A

decorated case. “Did you... Actually make a mixtape? Like a real, physical mixtape?”

“Do you actually have a fucking tape player? Look, shut up, desperate times, desperate measures. If I have to bring my spotify playlist to you through tape, so be it.”

“I just... Wow.” Richie put the case back in his pocket before Eddie could get a good look at any of the decorations, and then he put in the tape.

The first song started, and it was David Bowie’s “Let’s Dance,” because of course it was. Eddie smiled.

“Can’t have a playlist without David Bowie, Eds,” Richie said.

“I’m not going to argue with that.”

The tape was a nice mix of things Eddie knew and things he didn’t, classics and newer music, too. Eddie knew the variety was as much for Richie as it was for him, both because his playlists could be as scattered as his thoughts and because it would help him be a little less bored on the long car ride. They both went back and forth along the ride, singing along to the tape or other times talking or joking or trying to play games to keep both of them from dying of boredom. Sometimes Richie would seem to get lost in the music, drumming along with his hands on his legs, his socked feet propped up on the dashboard, staring out the window. The rest of the time, the music was only background noise for both of them.

Some of the songs were clearly on there for Eddie's sake, too - the David Bowie, including "Heroes," later on, which was a favorite for both of them - and songs Richie knew Eddie liked, like "Africa" and even "You Shook Me All Night Long," which was a bit of an inside joke between the two of them since Richie had played it one night when Eddie was a little drunk, and he'd sung along loudly enough that someone on their hall reported them to their RA for a noise violation.

The ride passed fairly quickly for how long it was, and they took breaks when they needed to just to stretch their legs.

When they pulled up to Eddie's, he parked the car on the street and took a moment to neaten his hair in the mirror. It was evening - after dinner, so any kind of awkward dinner with his mother could be avoided. He looked over at Richie, who just gave him a wink, and pushed up his glasses. Eddie rolled his eyes and got out to start getting their stuff. His mother met them at the door.

"Eddie-bear. Who's this?"

Eddie winced. Of course there had to be embarrassing nicknames. "This is Richie, Mom. My boyfriend. Remember?" He reached out and took Richie's hand, just to make the point, but it made his heart rate pick up, too. Richie squeezed his hand - Eddie appreciated the attempt at comfort.

"Right. Of course. Well, come in, then."

He wasn't sure why he'd thought his mother might pretend to be polite. Richie grinned at her, exaggerated, his eyebrows raised. "It's nice to meet you, too, Mrs. Kaspbrak! And what a lovely home you have."

"Thank you."

Eddie had already started dragging Richie away, but he wasn't really embarrassed - instead he was suppressing laughter. He'd been right that Richie had been the perfect choice.

They got to Eddie's room, and he only let go of Richie's hand to put down his things.

He looked down at his bed - the one bed. In all the other stress, he'd sort of forgotten that.

"I can, um. Sleep on the couch if you need me to?"

"Oh come on, Eddie Spaghetti, it's big enough for two." Richie pulled him down onto the bed and ruffled his hair, and Eddie laughed and shoved at him.

"Okay, asshole, alright. We'll share, then. But when I kick you out of bed half-asleep or something, just remember you asked for this."

"Ooh, kinky."

“Oh shut up.” Eddie pushed at Richie again, but Richie grabbed onto his wrists, so Eddie ended up on top of him, knees on either side of Richie’s hips. He blinked down at Richie for a moment, then laughed and rolled his eyes and moved off of him. “Okay, alright. Let’s not make so much noise that my mom thinks... What she’d think.”

“You mean let’s not make your mom think we’re fucking in your childhood bedroom. You’re saying I shouldn’t break out the exaggerated moaning sounds? I got ‘em all stocked up, Eds, you say the word. I’ve been practicing, just for this moment.”

Eddie sighed and brought his hands up to his face. “I regret everything.”

“Told you so.” Eddie felt the bed shift behind him and then Richie kissed his cheek and Eddie shoved him off again, but he started laughing. Richie grinned. “You seem a little stressed, Eds. I have a solution for that, but you gotta promise not to freak out.”

“...That does not sound comforting at all.”

“Promise?”

His eyes closed, Eddie took a deep breath. “Okay, sure. What’s your mysterious method?”

“...I maybe brought some weed.”

It was hardly a surprise that Richie smoked - Eddie knew that he and Bev didn't only smoke cigarettes together, and he had a sneaking suspicion that the person the RA was always complaining about who would climb the tree in front of their dorm and smoke weed there was probably Richie. Eddie wasn't even that opposed to the idea, in theory, but he'd never really tried it. His mother would have hated it, though. If anything, that was motivation at the moment.

He turned to face Richie and blinked at him. “Are you really suggesting that we smoke weed in my childhood bedroom? The night before my great aunt's wedding? While my mother is downstairs?” Richie smiled sheepishly at him, holding up a plastic bag with a couple of joints in it. Eddie sighed, and let his head fall forward. “Oh, what the hell. Fine. Just. Come here.” Eddie grabbed Richie's hand again, and pulled him to the window. His room was at the front of the house, and his window opened out onto the slope of the roof, over the porch. It was late, the house across the street's windows were all dark, and they could sit on the roof and the smell wouldn't be as strong in Eddie's room later.

Eddie watched Richie put the first joint in his mouth to light it, and watched him take the first long inhale. It felt a little like an excuse just to stare at Richie - and his mouth, especially, as he breathed out smoke in one slow exhale. He passed the joint to Eddie, and their fingers brushed, and Eddie licked his lips before he placed them where Richie's had been just moments before.

He'd been told before how to do it, and he'd watched Richie do it, obviously, so he inhaled deeply, held the smoke in his lungs for a moment, then exhaled again, slowly. He only coughed once or twice on the exhale, which he thought wasn't bad for his first time. He was

suddenly glad he'd turned out to not have asthma after all as a kid.

It wasn't doing much after one inhale, but Eddie suddenly had the thought that he was still fully dressed, including his binder, and he didn't want to deal with that once he was high. "I'm gonna go change, I'll be right back."

He crawled through the window, changed into his pyjamas, with a sweater over his normal sleep shirt, and tucked his clothes back into his bag. Then, with that all squared away, he climbed back out onto the roof and took the joint back from Richie - it looked shorter now. Proof that Richie had kept smoking while he was gone.

"I think you've got the right idea, Eds."

Richie climbed inside, and Eddie took a few slow drags off the joint while Richie was inside. He thought it was possible, though he wasn't sure, that he might have been feeling it a little.

When Richie came back, he plucked the joint from Eddie's fingers, and then they went back and forth, taking single inhales, until all that was left was the too-short end.

Eddie lay down on the roof, leaning back against the slope. He looked up at the sky and found that the lights in Maine were still dim enough that he could see the stars. He heard Richie taking another deep inhale, and assumed that he'd started on the second joint. Soon, it got pressed into his fingers, and Eddie took another long drag before he passed it back to Richie. He sighed the smoke out and laughed a little as he looked up at the stars.

“You know what? This is nice. This was a good idea. Thanks, Rich.”

“I’m glad I could help.”

Eddie turned to the side, looking at Richie, and then he realized Richie was only looking at him. He reached up and tugged at Richie’s shirt. “Hey, c’mere. Lay down.”

Richie smiled at him but did as he asked, lying so close that his arm was pressed against Eddie’s. “What is it?”

“Just. Look up. Stars.”

Doing as Eddie asked, Richie turned his head to look up at the sky. He blinked a few times, and Eddie watched him. “Oh, hey. Haven’t seen those in a while.”

“Yeah, well, we can’t, at school. It’s kind of nice, right? Not that I would live out here for this, you couldn’t fucking pay me enough, but. For a weekend.”

“For a weekend,” Richie echoed.

Eddie’s hand was still fisted in the fabric of Richie’s shirt, and he noticed that it’d taken him a little too long to realize, so he just left it

there, though he relaxed his fingers a little, so he was just holding on gently. “The only constellation I can ever remember is the little. Three stars in a line. Orion’s Belt. Then there’s supposed to be a guy around the belt.”

“If he’s only wearing a belt, do you think there’s a star for his dick?”

“How did I know you were gonna say that? Or something like it?”

Richie started to snicker at his own joke, and Eddie laughed, too, turning his head to press his face against Richie’s shoulder.

“You’re such an asshole,” Eddie muttered, but it was through his own giggles.

“Mm, but I’m your asshole date now, so.”

“So I’ve made a horrible mistake.”

They both laughed again, and Richie seemed to have left the joint to burn out on the roof somewhere, because he had both his hands in Eddie’s hair.

“Your hair’s so nice, Eds. How’d you even get it to do this?”

“I mostly just wash it.”

“Mm, that must be it.”

Eddie huffed out a laugh against Richie’s shoulder before he turned his head again - he ended up with his face nearly in Richie’s neck, but there was still enough room that his words weren’t muffled. “You can’t fool me. I see you go to take showers.”

“You have no idea what I do in there. Unless - Edward Kaspbrak, have you been following me into the showers?” Richie had put on some kind of proper southern accent for the later part of his sentence, and Eddie snorted and shoved at him.

“Oh yeah, totally, sounds exactly like what I do with my time. I just follow you into the showers.”

“I knew it all along. You can’t resist me.”

The truth of Richie’s statement hit a little close to home, so Eddie just snorted again and put his face back against Richie’s shoulder. “Ugh, shut up.”

Richie actually did shut up, then, at least for a minute or two. Then he moved a hand down to Eddie’s back. “I think you had the right idea with that sweater - you’re warm, and I’m freezing my ass off out here.”

Eddie sat up, and blinked down at Richie. He was only wearing a short sleeve shirt. Eddie scoffed at him. "Well, no wonder, idiot. Come on, make sure my roof's not gonna catch fire, and let's go back inside now."

He watched as Richie stepped on the last half of the joint to snub it out, and then they both climbed back in through the window and lay down on the bed.

Without pretense, Eddie curled close to Richie, just like he had on the roof, with his head against Richie's shoulder, and Richie put an arm around Eddie. Richie's skin was cold where it brushed against the back of Eddie's neck, and it made his hair stand on end. Worried he'd get too warm, Eddie sat up to pull off his sweater, then lay back down in just his sleep shirt and shorts. He pulled the blankets over them both, and settled back against Richie.

"Hopefully this wedding tomorrow will be relatively painless, I'm sorry if it's not," he muttered to Richie.

"Two old people get married, how bad can it be? Anyways, I've got you, you've got me. We'll have fun, and then we'll go home."

Richie calling their dorm room home made Eddie's heart twist up in his chest - he felt the same way, really. He nuzzled against the soft fabric of Richie's shirt and hummed. "Yeah. True. We will." He put his own arm around Richie's waist, enjoying the warmth now that they were both under the blankets and settled in. "Thanks again. For all this. For coming with me, and not freaking out about anything, and also kind of just. Being you. I'm glad I got you for a roommate,

Rich.” Eddie knew that he was babbling in part because he was high, but he wasn’t embarrassed, really - he meant every word.

He felt gentle pressure at the top of his head - maybe Richie’s nose? And then Richie pulled him a little closer. “Of course, Eds. I’m glad, too. Who knows where I’d be if I hadn’t met you?”

“Well, probably just hanging out with Bev, but I’m glad anyways.”

“Mm. Well. I’d rather be here.”

Richie’s tone was completely genuine, and Eddie pressed a smile against his chest. He didn’t know what to say to that, though, except things he still wasn’t going to say, so he just smiled and smiled until he drifted off to sleep.

They woke up the next morning to Sonia pounding on the door.

“We’re leaving in half an hour Eddie! You two had better get up and ready.”

Eddie sat up abruptly, still bleary and achy from sleep. One of his legs was still thrown over Richie’s, and his left arm was still pressed against Richie’s waist, with Richie’s arm on the other side of it. He nudged Richie, then started getting out of bed. “Come on, we’ve gotta get dressed and I have to see if I can find coffee so I don’t murder everyone at the wedding.”

Richie groaned, and grabbed Eddie's shirt to pull him closer, pressing his face against Eddie's hip. "Five more minutes, Eds, Christ."

"I want to be awake even less than you do, trust me."

After some more shoving, Eddie got Richie out of bed before he went to the bathroom to get ready. He brushed his teeth, tamed his hair, and put on his suit. For someone who'd been smoking pot on the roof only hours before, he looked surprisingly presentable. He sighed and went back into the bedroom to find Richie fiddling with his tie in the mirror.

"C'mere." Eddie went over and tied Richie's tie for him, straightening it carefully before he stepped away. When he did move back, he got a good look at Richie - his curls were as messy as ever, and his glasses were still a little big, the rims a little too thick, but he grinned, and his whole face lit up, and the suit really did look nice on him, and it was a little too much for Eddie to take. He flushed and went to straighten his own tie in the mirror.

"You look good," he managed to get out.

"I'll take good. Makes me almost qualified to be the date of the stunningly handsome Mr. Edward Kaspbrak."

"God, that's worse than the nicknames," Eddie muttered, and Richie laughed. He came up behind Eddie and wrapped his arms around Eddie's waist. Eddie looked in the mirror to meet Richie's eyes, and

found that they did look good together. He smiled. "Well. We will be the best-looking couple there, won't we?"

"Depends on if we can beat your elderly aunt and her husband-to-be."

Eddie snorted and turned around, running his hands under the lapels of Richie's suit jacket. He looked up, and made eye contact with Richie. It was a little overwhelming. "I still need coffee," he said.

Richie smiled at him and shoved him away, gently. "Yeah, you do, I really don't wanna get violently killed on the way to this fucking wedding, so. Yes, I think we should find you some coffee."

"You're so stupid," Eddie muttered, but he smiled. He started to walk downstairs, but he found Richie reaching forward to take his hand as he did.

"Your mom could sneak up at any moment," Richie muttered, and Eddie's heart sank a little even as he smiled, because the gesture was cute, but the reminder that it was all for show was... less than cute.

They went into the kitchen, and Eddie did find coffee. He was standing at the counter, making it, when Richie came up behind him and wrapped his arms around Eddie's waist again.

Then Sonia came in. "Oh. Good morning."

Eddie closed his eyes and leaned back against Richie - and Richie tightened his arms around Eddie. It was nice, having a physical sign that Richie was right there, ready to back him up.

“You want any coffee, mommy?”

“No thank you. I’ll see you out at the car in ten minutes - we can drive over separately, and you can follow in your car.”

She left, but Richie stayed right behind Eddie, chin hooked over his shoulder.

“I fucking hate your mom,” Richie whispered in Eddie’s ear.

Eddie laughed, even though there wasn’t much humor in it. “Yeah. Me, too.”

When the coffee was done, Eddie poured two mugs full, and put cream and sugar in Richie’s, and left his own black. He turned to hand Richie his mug, and Richie took both mugs and put them back down on the counter. Eddie blinked at him, confused.

Instead of saying anything, Richie crowded Eddie against the counter, and put his hands on Eddie’s face. Eddie closed his eyes.

"Is this okay?" Richie asked quietly. Eddie just nodded, and then Richie was kissing him.

Eddie was confused at the sudden turn of events, but he put his hands on Richie's shoulders and kissed back, sighing against Richie's lips. When Richie pulled back, Eddie stayed still for a moment, enjoying the closeness and the slight tingle he could still feel on his lips. Then he opened his eyes and looked at Richie. "What was that for?"

"Uh. Just... in case?"

Richie seemed as confused as Eddie was. It was a considerate gesture, though, in a way. If they did need or want to kiss at the wedding to carry on the facade, at least they'd kissed first like this - in the quiet of Eddie's kitchen, with the smell of coffee in the air and the sunlight coming through the windows in a way that made the little particles of dust shimmer and dance. It had been nice. Eddie thought of leaning forward to kiss Richie again, but everything felt unsettled, so he picked up his coffee and pressed his lips to the warm mug instead, taking a long sip.

They both finished their coffee quietly and then went out to the car. Sonia got into her station wagon silently, and Richie gave Eddie a look as they got into Eddie's car. The mixtape started playing as they got in, and the tension from the kitchen broke as Richie did all the voices in "Rock Lobster" just to make Eddie laugh.

Not to be outdone, Eddie made some pretty impeccable fish noises that set Richie off, too.

The song was long enough it got them nearly to his great aunt's house - the wedding was going to be in her backyard, not a church. It was only a few more minutes, and not even a full song, before they pulled up and parked. There were lots of cars, in the driveway and on either side of the road, as well as parked all through the front yard. Eddie and Richie got out, and immediately Richie took hold of Eddie's outstretched hand.

They reached the tent, and Sonia went to find a seat without even glancing back at the boys - also sitting in a chair without another unoccupied chair anywhere near it. Eddie glanced at Richie, and Richie just squeezed his hand.

There were chairs in the back that were unoccupied and still had plenty of space around them, so Eddie sat down and took Richie with him. He was sort of hoping, really, that no one in his family would recognize him, and that he could just pretend to be some mildly acquainted wedding guest.

It was probably only because his mother had kept him so secluded growing up, but he mostly seemed to succeed. There were a few extra glances and whispers thrown at him, but Eddie couldn't be sure if that was because someone recognized him, or because they saw him holding hands with Richie. Fortunately, they weren't very early for the wedding - he should have known his mother wouldn't want to socialize much either - so it got started before anyone came to bother him.

Seeing his great aunt walk down the aisle to meet her husband was an odd combination of sweet and a little hilarious, just like Eddie had thought it would be. Richie started to snicker, so Eddie nudged him with an elbow, but it just meant that Richie muffled his laughter in Eddie's shoulder instead.

Every once in a while, Richie would lean over and whisper something like “You wanna place bets on who’s gonna break a hip tonight?” and Eddie would bite his lip to try and hold back his laughter and elbow Richie again.

They made it through the ceremony without being openly disruptive, but only because it was so short. The reception was supposed to take place in the same tent, so everyone got out of their chairs and things started to get moved around. Eddie squeezed Richie’s hand briefly, then pulled away.

“I’ve gotta go and get the gift out of the car, I forgot. Are you good here?”

“Yeah, sure.” Richie smiled, and Eddie smiled back at him before he went outside. He got to the car and got the gift out before he ran back into his mother.

“You haven’t spoken to me alone at all since you got here, Eddie.”

“Well. I brought Richie with me, mom. It’s a little rude to leave him on his own.”

“You really couldn’t just bring a nice girl, could you?”

Eddie clutched the box that the blender was in just a little tighter.

“No. Not really. I don’t really know any nice girls. And Richie and I are together, so.” That was a lie, and Eddie felt it in his throat, and he could tell his mother noticed something off about it.

“He isn’t good enough for you, Eddie. I don’t think any boy is, but especially not that one.”

The box crunched a little under his fingers, denting from the pressure, and Eddie adjusted his grip. “Mommy, if anything, he’s too good for me. So I’m going to stop leaving him sitting on his own in there. I’ll talk to you later.”

He walked quickly back into the tent, and put the gift with the growing pile. It only took him a minute to find Richie - the only blue suit and tall mop of curly dark hair there. Eddie went over to him and pulled him into a hug immediately, pressing his face against Richie’s shoulder again.

Today, for the wedding probably, Richie was wearing cologne, and the suit wasn’t the same soft fabric of his usual worn t-shirts, so the hug wasn’t quite as comforting as it normally would have been. Still, Richie immediately put his arms around Eddie, too, and the instinct was so familiar that Eddie knew it was Richie, under it all, and that was more comforting than anything else.

“Hey, Eds, what’s wrong?”

Eddie shook his head. “Nothing. Just my mom. Sorry.”

“You want me to go beat her up?”

A laugh escaped, and Eddie tilted his head back to look up at Richie.
“No. Thanks. That’s okay.”

The music started, then, and Eddie jumped a little, and stepped back from Richie.

For the first few dances, they sat down, but as soon as other people got on the dance floor around the newlyweds, Richie pulled Eddie up with him to dance.

There were people staring at them, but Richie clearly didn’t care, and that gave Eddie a little extra confidence, too.

In a move that was hardly a surprise, they’d apparently hired some kind of oldies DJ - most of the songs were from the 50s and 60s, but there was definitely nothing more recent than the mid-80s. Still, that meant “Let’s Dance” made an appearance, and Eddie laughed as Richie guided him around the dance floor to it, mouthing dramatically along with the lyrics.

They slow danced to Sinatra and The Beach Boys, and Eddie found himself surprisingly relaxed - even found himself able to lean his head against Richie’s shoulder, pressing close as they swayed together.

It was another slow dance, with Eddie resting his chin on Richie’s

shoulder, the two of them practically dancing cheek to cheek, when Eddie opened his eyes and saw his mother watching them. In a movie, it might have been the moment when she looked pleased and teary and seemed to have some kind of change of heart. Instead, she just watched, nearly expressionless, except for the hint of disgust. Eddie pulled back a little and Richie looked at him.

“Hey. What is it?” Eddie shook his head, and Richie looked to see what Eddie had been looking at. He caught sight of Sonia, then turned back around. He put his hands on Eddie’s face. “Eds. Eddie. Look at me.”

Eddie looked at him, and Richie started to lean in, and Eddie pulled away and ran out of the tent, ending up just a few steps away from the door, his arms curled around himself, as he stared at the back of the house. He hated that his mother could still make him feel the way he did in that moment - like somehow her disgust was right, and he was wrong. Particularly in that moment, that he was wrong because Richie was kissing him as some kind of friendly favor, and he was never going to get what he actually wanted, and he didn't deserve it anyways.

The song had changed at some point, and he could hear the muffled sounds of Toto’s "Africa" coming from inside the tent. He laughed, but it came out choked and watery.

After just a moment or two, Richie was behind him, placing just a hand on his shoulder.

“Eddie.”

Taking a deep breath, his eyes closed, Eddie finally turned to face Richie and really looked at him again. "Sorry. I'm sorry."

"You don't have to be sorry, I just. I'm trying to figure out what we're doing here. Or. What I'm doing here."

"I just didn't... It turns out I can't do this for... show or whatever. I get the impulse, I should be fine just doing things like that to piss her off, but I'm not."

Richie put his hands on either side of Eddie's face again, and Eddie looked at him, wide-eyed. "Just look at me. Calm down. It's okay."

Eddie did calm down a little, finally able to breathe, and he leaned in, too, unable to resist when Richie was right there, staring at him, his fingers cool and gentle against Eddie's jawline, and Eddie could see every one of his freckles, some even magnified behind his glasses.

"There's nobody out here," Eddie said quietly.

"There was nobody in the kitchen this morning, either."

Richie leaned in, and they were kissing again. Eddie could only linger for a moment before he pulled back again. "Wait. What... What are we doing, Richie?"

"Jesus, Eds." Richie pulled back, then, and his hands went with him,

but Eddie still had hands on his waist to keep him from walking away.

“No, wait, Richie, seriously, please.”

“Eddie, you’ve gotta be kidding. After last night, and this morning...”

“This morning was just like. Practice, wasn’t it? Something to make it easier or nicer, if...”

“Was that what it was?” Richie’s tone was blatantly sarcastic, distinctly bitter, and even his expression was clearly unhappy.

Eddie clung a little tighter to Richie’s suit, terrified he was going to walk away. “That’s not... I just thought... That’s what I thought.”

“I flirt with you for months, I agree to be your date for a wedding, I make you a mixtape, I kiss you in your mom’s fucking kitchen. What is it gonna take, Eddie?”

“You... you flirt with everybody.”

“I flirt with you.”

Slowly, steadily, Eddie’s entire perception of his relationship with

Richie realigned. Every time Richie had kissed him on the cheek, all the cuddling from the night before, Richie's pleased but surprised reaction to Eddie accidentally saying Richie was his boyfriend. Eddie looked at Richie again, and he knew that all of his thoughts were probably reflected in his expression. "Rich..." he said quietly.

"Now he gets it," Richie said, and the corner of his mouth finally quirked up in a smile.

That smile was all he needed, and Eddie slid his hands into Richie's curls and pulled him in for a proper, lingering kiss. Richie's glasses were pressed, crooked and awkward, between their faces, and Eddie scraped his teeth against Richie's lower lip like it could bring them closer somehow. Both of them made small, desperate sounds as they kissed, and Eddie was utterly amazed to find that Richie wanted it just as much as he did.

When they finally did separate, they were both out of breath.

"Eds, whaddaya say we blow this popsicle stand?"

Eddie laughed, and pressed his forehead against Richie's. "Yeah. Good. Great idea. Let's."

They walked back to his car hand in hand, and once they got in, he texted his mom.

Richie and I are going back to school. Sorry for leaving so soon.

He didn't really expect a response. Instead, he put his phone in the cup holder, then leaned over the gearshift to kiss Richie again, more gently this time. They both pulled away, then leaned in for a few shorter kisses before Eddie could finally bring himself to put on his seatbelt and start the car. "Let's go home, huh?" he said with a smile.

Richie smiled back. "Yeah. Home. Sounds good."

The sounds of Richie's mixtape filled the car, and they started the long drive back.

"You know, I um. I actually made a mixtape of songs that remind me of you. It's in the tape collection. In the dash. If you get tired of yours."

This time, Richie's face really lit up, and he reached over and took Eddie's hand, leaving him just one to drive with. "You know, I'll keep that in mind."

Eddie decided driving with one hand all the way back to New York might be alright after all.

Author's Note:

i have to say that even though i perceive heroes as more of eddie and richie's song than africa, this fic never would have happened without that [post of africa playing from another room](#), because i like, got that scene outside the wedding tent in my head and then a few more, and then it all fell together. kj sdf

anyways!!! i hope you guys enjoyed this mess that got way too long!!! i just wanted some fake boyfriends. let me know what you think and hopefully i'll have more fic to post soon!! i still have a lot that i'm working on, i promise <3 also genuinely please feel free to find me on tumblr and send me writing prompts at eddykaspbraks!!